

REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for performing a thorough search.

STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-39 are pending in the case. Claims 1, 7, and 20 are original. Claims 2-6, 8-19, and 21-26 are amended. Claims 27-39 are new.

Claim 24 is amended to obviate the rejection under 35 USC §112, second paragraph. Claims 15 and 26 are amended to obviate an objection. Claims 2-6, 8-19, and 21-26 are additionally amended to improve readability.

I. DRAWINGS

Attached are a new set of drawings and marked set of drawings showing the changes to the original drawings.

A. 37 CFR §1.84(p)(5)

The drawings were objected to for allegedly failing to comply with 37 CFR §1.84(p)(5) for missing reference signs. The specification and drawings are amended to replace “150” with “200” and “135” with “134” in all occurrences in agreement with FIG. 1. Additionally, the label “300”, is added to FIG. 3. Therefore the drawings are now in compliance with 37 CFR §1.84(p)(5).

B. 37 CFR §1.83(a)

The drawings were objected to as allegedly failing to comply with 37 CFR §1.83(a) for not clearly describing the decision boxes of FIG. 3. FIG. 3 is amended to replace box 320 with a diamond, and to show the flow from box 320 for both flow alternatives of decision box 320. The contents of Box 335 have been amended so that it is no longer confused with a decision box. Therefore the drawings are now in compliance with 37 CFR §1.83(a).

C. 37 CFR §1.84(p)(4)

The drawings were objected to for using two different labels to designate the same item. The drawings have been amended to clearly reference characters “132” designates a different block than reference character “133”, and that reference characters “215” designates a different block than reference character “210”. Therefore the drawings are now in compliance with 37 CFR §1.84(p)(4).

D. Informalities-Block labels

FIGs. 1 and 2 were objected to for not including text labels. Accordingly, FIGs. 1 and 2 have been amended to include text labels. Therefore, the Applicants respectfully submit that this objection should be withdrawn.

II. ABSTRACT

The Office Action includes a reminder regarding the proper language of an abstract per MPEP 608.01(b). The abstract is amended to comply with MPEP 608.01(b).

III. OBJECTIONS TO THE SPECIFICATION

A. 37 CFR §1.75(d)(1)

The specification was objected to under 37 CFR §1.75(d)(1) for lack of antecedents of the phrase “packet label” in the specification. Accordingly, claims 14 and 25 are amended to recite “flow label” in agreement with the specification. Therefore the drawings are now in compliance with 37 CFR §1.75(d)(1).

B. Informalities

The specification was objected to for containing informalities. The Application has been reviewed for informalities, as requested by the Examiner. The specification has been amended to correct the informalities pointed out by the Examiner and any other informalities found. Additionally, the references to the applications listed on page 6 have been updated. Therefore the Applicants respectfully submit that this objection should be withdrawn.

C. MPEP 608.01(m)

Claims 15 and 26 were objected to for containing the reference character “122” that was not enclosed within parentheses. Claims 15 and 26 are amended to remove the reference character “122”. Therefore, claims 15 and 26 are now in compliance with MPEP 608.01(m).

OTHER AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

To comply with 37 CFR §1.84(p)(5) the lead line connecting label 210 to inferior leaf 215 was removed. However, the term “inferior node” may be generic to a “terminal

leaf”, because a terminal leaf is inherently inferior to the root node unless the entire tree is just the root node. Accordingly, in the original specification, FIG. 2 correctly indicated that terminal leaf 215 was also an inferior node by showing a lead line connecting terminal leaf 215 and label “210”. Since the lead line connecting label 210 and terminal leaf 215 has been removed from the amended FIG. 2, the sentence, “Terminal leaf node 215 is also an example of an inferior node” is added to the second paragraph of page 14 convey the status of terminal leaf 215 as an inferior leaf, which was originally indicated in original FIG. 2.

IV. CLAIM REJECTIONS – 35 USC §112, SECOND PARAGRAPH

Claim 24 was rejected for lacking antecedents for the “apparatus”. Claim 24 is amended by this Response to replace the word “apparatus” with the word “method”, thereby correcting the antecedents.

V. CLAIM REJECTIONS – 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action rejected claims 1-26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Kerr et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,243,667). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Kerr et al. and the present Application are assigned to Cisco Systems, Inc. A copy of the Notice of Recordation of Assignment is attached. The filing date of the present application (which is September 5, 2000) is prior to the issue date of Kerr et al. (which is June 5, 2001). Therefore, the Kerr et al. patent is only a valid reference under paragraph (e) of 35 USC §102. According to paragraph (c) of 35 USC §103, as of November 29, 1999, a reference that is only valid under 35 USC §102(e) “shall not

preclude patentability” under 35 USC §103 (see MPEP 706.02(l)(1)). Therefore, Kerr et al. is not a valid reference under 35 USC §103, and the rejection of claim 1-26 should be withdrawn.

VI. NEW CLAIMS

New claim 27 is similar to claim 1, except claim 27 is a bus carrying a data packet having the M-trie data structure of claim 1, and is therefore allowable.

New claim 28 is similar to claim 16. However, claim 28 is an apparatus. Also, instead of the expanded M-trie data structure, claim 28 recites, “the data packet includes information in an M-trie data structure having at least a header with at least an entity that indicates an action for the router to perform to select a leaf associated with the M-trie data structure”. Additionally, new claim 28 recites, “wherein the looking up includes performing the action”, unlike claim 16, and is therefore allowable.

New claims 28, 29, and 30 are similar to one another except claims that claim 28 is a method, claim 29 is an apparatus that implements the method of claim 28, and claim 30 is a memory that stores the method of claim 28. Therefore, claims 29 and 30 are also allowable.

New claims 31-39 correspond to claims 17, and 19-26, respectively. However, claims 31-39 are computer memory that store a method similar to the method of claims 17, and 19-26, and are allowable for at least the same reasons.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND MISCELLANEOUS

The Applicants believe that all issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed and that allowance of the pending claims is appropriate. Entry of the amendments herein and further examination on the merits are respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (408) 414-1213 to discuss any issue that may advance prosecution or any other issues related to this application.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee that may be due in connection with this Reply to our Deposit Account No. 50-1302.

Respectfully submitted,

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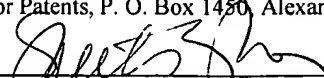
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

on April 15, 2004
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